



March 17, 2009

To: House Agriculture Committee

RE: HB 445 Montana's Farmer Protection Bill

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Mr. Chairman and members of Senate Agriculture Committee:


On behalf of myself and the 6 employees of Timeless Seeds, Inc. I would like to go on record supporting HB 445.

I am a third generation Montana farmer and co-founder and manager of Timeless Seeds, Inc. Timeless Seeds is a 20 year old business started by four Montana farmers, headquartered in Conrad, with production facilities in Ulm, near Great Falls. We contract, process, and market specialty grains grown across the state and region, and market them in high value markets both domestically and overseas.

While this bill is titled a "Farmer Protection Bill, in fact it also directly protects independent seed and grain processors and marketers in Montana. While one would assume that current law protects both farmers and seed plants from unauthorized trespass by large, often multi-national, corporations who own patented seeds; that current law protects farmers and seed plants from liability from for unknowingly handling patented seed or grain; that current law protects farmers and seed plants from unreasonable legal expense of defending oneself from trespass or unknowingly handing patented seed, apparently that is not the case. A number of incidences reported by both farmers and fellow seed plant owners across the country indicate neither farmers nor local seed plants are protected in other states and they have been subjected to both trespass and unwarranted law suits.

HB 445 would establish the basic right to do business without undue financial burden and unfair harassment. It establishes protocols and procedures that are fair to all concerned. In the end, HB 445 is about property rights for both farmers and seed businesses. We strongly support HB 445 as a needed protection for Montana business enterprises.

Sincerely,


David N. Oien, President
Timeless Seeds, Inc.